[illegible] (1961-1962) 1963 9012 Nelson 9012

[illegible], [illegible] a cold snow and an airtight house. In Lower Fort, houses often contain eight cots acquired from construction camps along the Hudson Highway. At least one family in each settlement usually owns a radio which is on, however obscure its working order. Shelves consist of wooden planking boxes nailed with their backs to the log walls. Food, clothing, and other equipment is piled on the floor, stored under cots, or suspended from poles stretching across the width of a cabin.

Away from Lower Fort practically all furniture is locally manufactured out of hand-hewed poplar or whitewood spruce. Wooden benches, spruce ice scrapers, two or twelve inches in diameter and eighteen inches high, also serve as stools.

A cabin in camp often presents an untidy picture of a great many articles stored in any available space. The floor is sure to be covered in extreme cases of disorder. Here the cabin may be littered with tins of jam, butter, syrup, half used packages of macaroni, and other food left over from several meals. Food may stand under the tables and even in the centre of the floor. The tables may be piled with guns, clothing, toys, and miscellaneous objects.

Odille has described the dresses and furnishings of one of the older cabins in Lower Fort (perhaps Miss Dickens's house) as he saw it during April 1933. " . . . we go into one of the cabins, stooping to pass the low doorway and straining our eyes to the dim light. Beyond a bed is one corner and a stove in another there is little to be seen. The woman sitting on the bed regards us questioningly, but the eyes of the boy beside her are bright and full of curiosity. Two men are here over some pelts laid out on the floor, martens and lynx. Visitors who come when the trapping was the big season said one of them explained laconically, 'She good. Two child.' "[1]

In summer, building consists of a single sleeping bag or a pair of heavy wooden blankets. In winter a second sleeping bag may be used as additional blankets. Beds are sometimes covered with dry grass. Some families have acquired single iron army mattresses from construction camps. In daytime, when people sleep on the ground in cabins or tents, the bedding is rolled into a large roll and stored in the rear of the dwelling where it becomes a backrest for the occupants.

In winter, spruce brush is laid in front of the entrance to a cabin or tent frame, or a heavy log is thrown immediately inside the door of a house. Here a person scrapes the snow from his moccasins before the warmth of the building causes the melting snow to wet his footwear.

Cabins with floors are swept every day or so with a broom. New brush is laid in tents and floorless cabins about once every two weeks, the old branches being discarded. Every fall cabins are reinforced where necessary and additional soil may be piled on the shallow eaves of a dirt roof. Heavy snow is removed from the roof of a sod cabin and from the tops of tents. Chinking and daubing are done by women, while a man keeps the roof in repair. If [illegible] tents burn or otherwise become damaged, a woman takes down the shelter and sews a new piece of canvas into the damaged area.

Mice are household pests. Dwellings often contain mousetraps, most of which are of native manufacture. To make a mousetrap, a man takes a piece of wood, fifteen inches long,

[1] Odille, Hardy and the Canadian Northwest (1934), 105.

531 Sleeveless and unisex tee usually decorated by being trimmed with strips of cow or camel fur (rabbit, fox, or beaver) or by the addition of an embroidered floral design. Slipper necklaces may be decorated with a second tongue of white cotton cloth or a piece of colored velvet sewn to an underlying crescent or narrow tongue. The cuffs are sometimes bordered with embroidered pointed black velvet or cloth like denim cloth about an inch wide. The principal embroidery stitches are the outline, cross, and chain stitch. The first two are used for floral designs, while the latter is employed to embroider borders along the upper and lower edges of the cuff trimming an slipper necklaces. Since the war it has been difficult to obtain glass beads, so that headwork designs on necklaces have been largely replaced by silk embroidery. Skeins and even purchased yarns are trimmed around the head and cuffs with fox or wolverine fur, the latter being preferred for this purpose because it does not frost. In general, clothing decoration is limited.

515 Men shave once or twice a week. Some of the younger men several times sought to
332 encourage mustaches during the period of field work, but only two older men permanently displayed this feature. Men's hair is cut by anyone who owns shears and clippers. In winter the hair is allowed to grow long and thick, and the only attention it receives is a casual morning combing.

302 Women do not comb their hair while traveling, but in camp and at the trading post the younger women exhibit considerable consciousness of their coiffure. A favorite hairdress is to wear the hair rolled over the forehead and sometimes all around the head (Pl. 5, a and c). The rolls, however, are uneven and wisps of hair are always falling loose, even the ribbon or rag used to keep the roll in place being exposed at many places. Many young girls comb the hair straight to the sides and allow it to fall over the neck (Pl. 5). Older women dress the hair by braiding it and putting it up at the back of the head, or by parting it on one side and pinning it at the sides with bobby pins and barrettes.

Cosmetics gaining favor include lipstick, powder, nail polish, and perfume. Since the local selection of lipstick shades is limited, no effort can be made to match it to the shade of complexion. The same lack of matching enters into the use of nail polish, which is often crudely applied and not given sufficient chance to dry. A popular amusement of girls is to paint the fingernails of men, boys, and very young children. Perfumes are in great demand among girls and women. Cosmetics begin to be used at about the age of thirteen or fourteen; older women, beyond the age of thirty, are little interested or experienced in this behavior.

ROUTINE OF LIVING

512 Discussion has ranged through the principal economic techniques by which individuals adapt to the environment to secure the satisfaction of their needs. Certain residual needs, rest, cleanliness, and elimination now remain to be considered. Following this material we will examine the effort and motives which underlie the technical activities that have been described.

512 In summer young people tend to rise late, after ten or eleven o'clock, and seldom go to
513 sleep before midnight. Unmarried boys keep even later hours, with darkness assembling in some camp to play cards, strum guitars, and wait until the older people have gone to sleep; then they begin to tease the unmarried girls. On a night when there is a dance, young men

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and couples, often with children, seldom go home until well after midnight, while un- 512
married people remain dressed until three or four o'clock in the morning. Older people 513
will be very young children retire and rise early.

In winter everyone tends to retire early in the long northern nights, and people seldom arise before the sun—about nine o'clock in the morning. On the very few or whole morning earlier rising obtains.

Indians retire fully clothed, except in summer, when underwear and outer clothes are 514
sometimes removed by the younger people. In winter, an extra sweater and dry underwear may be donned before going to sleep as additional protection against cold. Following a day of winter travel, people are always careful to hang sweaters, socks and duffel in a warm dry place where these garments will have a chance to dry thoroughly. Despite full awareness of danger from burning, people frequently place damp sweaters too close to a fire causing them to scorch.

People sleep on the back or side and always cover their heads with blankets or underclothes. In summer this habit serves as a protection against mosquitoes, while in winter it is necessary for warmth. According to many people's admissions, the Indian tends to be a light sleeper. In summer one hears frequent complaints of having been unable to sleep due to the sounds of trucks, crying dogs, or young people "running around."

A person seldom washes more than once a day and then it is upon arising. The hands 515
arms, face, and neck are generously lathered with soap and rinsed in a washbasin. Bathing is rare, except in summer when boys and girls may go swimming. Nevertheless the people appear clean and emit no offensive body odor. Their clothes and hair, however, smell of wood smoke. Little attention is paid to head lice and nits, most children being afflicted by these pests. Sometimes washing with gasoline is used to get rid of body lice. One very old 516
woman was observed to search her clothes for lice which she would crack with her teeth and eat. A few young people were seen to clean their teeth upon arising, but the custom of this practice seems limited.

Extreme privacy marks the function of elimination. When in a group, a person will 517
never announce that he is going to the toilet but says "I go out," or else simply slips away unobtrusively. Such a departure never meets with comment. People also avoid looking when they see a man or woman going off into the brush alone, and the enclosed toilet area near a camp is generally avoided except for its purpose. Although young men will urinate and defecate in the presence of one or more friends of their own age and sex, urinating is always accomplished by facing away from another person, thereby concealing the genitals. Men urinate in a standing position. Women are much shyer than men and always go a considerable distance into the brush to perform these bodily functions. While adults will never urinate or defecate in the house, an exception is sometimes made for very young children who, in cold weather, are permitted to urinate in a tin can. Children are also not obliged to move as far into the brush to eliminate as adults, and when very young often do so only a few steps from a camp or cabin. People always avoid urinating on a trail; instead they turn to one side, even when wearing snowshoes. Adults were reported to defecate two or three times a day. Twigs or moss are used to clean the anus.

No shame is attached to spitting or clearing the nose. Many men spit constantly and 518

cited were high all around the central space. The warmth of the fire caused the snow to loosen, a condition that lessened bitter penetration from wind. At other times people dug into a snowbank to fashion an overnight shelter. Snow shovels were not widely used among the Lower Rivers Indians, as their people moved more with the aid of snowshoes. A snowhouse contained a fire, the smoke of which escaped through a hole in the roof.

In summer forms of an enemy attack led the people to seek cover the camp where young children could be secured and covered with earthen tides (possibly camouflaged with earth?). Birch-bark, snowshoes, and grass mat houses remained unidentified by informants. Log cabins commenced to enjoy popularity after the introduction of the steel ax following white contact. Skin-covered tipis are said to have been introduced by a Fort Laird family. It is interesting to note that while anthropological thinking might classify together the mat and skin-covered conical lodge Indians used to distinguish them sharply.

Appurtenances associated exactly to aboriginal dwellings. Spruce brush or grass provided floor covering, the grass first being softened by rubbing between the hands. People especially favored grass for sleeping places. Raised platforms did not find a place in houses and stuffed pillows are also denied. Sleepers lay covered by robes of moose rabbit or ground-hog skins or blankets consisting a number of beaver and marten pelts sewn together. Dirtied snow and other debris were brushed away from dwellings with a willow broom.

Other than the cache, non-residential structures were represented only by the sudatory, which was built over ground that had been excavated to a depth of about 12 inches. Atop the excavated space, willow poles were bent and lashed together, following which a stretching of tanned skins were over the framework. A hole for ventilation opened in the top of the dome. Sweat houses contained no entry, the user simply lifting the lower edge of the cover where he wished to enter or leave. Hot rocks dashed with water furnished steam as well as a heat so intense that the bather might be driven to lift a corner of the cover to admit cool air. Commercial structures found no place in the Kaska settlement and even the brush enclosed dance or ceremonial place appears to have been lacking.[1]

The efficiency of any dwelling in winter depended chiefly on fire. Heat also constituted a prerequisite for many technological operations, ranging from cooking to snowshoe making. Two versions of a common myth explaining the origin of fire (or rather of pyrites) are given below.

One Indian [Name?] had this rock with didn't want to give it to the Indians. He wanted to keep it. Another Indian stole the stone and gave it to Fox Man who ran away. Trappers in culture hero] secured the rock and made fire with it. Then he threw the rock all around, all over the country, so that everybody could have fire (X).

Crow and Wolf held a meeting. This took place before there were any people in the world. Crow had been in the habit of flying around and when any animal killed meat he would be on hand to take some

[1] Honigmann, *Ethnography and Acculturation of the Fort Nelson Slave* (1946), 89; Osgood, *Contributions to the Ethnography of the Kutchin* (1936), 31, 121, 123.

[illegible] Taylor

[illegible]

[illegible] nationally reached a distance of 30 feet and accommodated several families, smaller ones were built in this style and housing only one or two families occurred more frequently. Both back and gable-end buildings were unknown. A Kutchin River man apparently regularly familiar with the steambaths but would venture no description of its form or construction. Women erected houses and were believed to construct latter structures than men. Qualities governing selection of a dwelling site included "level" (i.e., dry) ground and accessibility to water. Dry wood could be found nearly everywhere. People never constructed the ground of a house site.

While a dwelling women occupied the side nearest the entry, while a husband had his place toward the rear. Daughters slept near the mother, sons farther back from the entry. Infants stayed in skin hammocks suspended over the mothers' sleeping places. Along the Kutchin River, at least, babies used hammocks of plaited, split spruce roots lined with skins. Specially constructed fireplaces or sleeping platforms did not occur. People lived on a carpet of spruce brush and at night covered themselves with robes of grey squirrel and ground-hog pelts or plaited rabbit-skin. Grizzly bear robes, because of their size and warmth, provided especially desirable blankets. Some people used pillows made by packing duck or partridge feathers in a smoked skin bag.

The sweat house, built for the use of both sexes, was the only type of non-residential structure. Hemispherical in shape and about four feet high it contained a roof opening designed to permit the escape of excess heat and steam. No communal ceremonies occurred.

Both sexes showed equal skill in kindling fire by the strike-a-light method.[1] One informant denied the use of fire drills (5) but another men remembered a bow drill which, he claimed, had been displaced from the culture because of its power efficiency compared to the use of flint and pyrites (WT). Boys and girls commonly sought fuel with some assistance from adults. In winter when many married women carried fire on glowing poles 15 or 16 inches long. Fire keys through the night if banked with earth or ashes.

Fishing. Winter dwellings conformed to the usual two types: conical with a framework of poles and inverted V-shaped. Bending willow spruce brush, moss, and sod but never green birch. Occasionally a household possessed sufficient skins to cover a conical lodge. In summer the Indians did not live in houses and only rain impelled them to put up hasty brush-ins. Surprisingly the construction of sweat houses met with denial. In the

[1] A tale collected by Teit tells how Bear's monopoly of the fire stone was broken by a little bird who visited Bear's lodge to warm himself. While picking lice from the Bear the bird broke the bear's belt and flew off with the stone, passing this object to a number of evening animals. Last to receive the prize was Fox whose fight to a high mountain exhausted Bear. "Fox broke up the fire-stone on the top of the mountain, and threw the fragments a piece to each tribe. Then the many tribes all over the earth obtained fire; *and this is why there is fire in the rocks and woods everywhere now.*" As a result of losing fire Bear made a hole in the earth to keep himself warm in winter—the origin of the bear's den! Teit, *Kutchin Tales* (1917), 443-444.

It will be recalled that the Upper Liard Indians made fire with the strike-a-light method. The Tlingit (including the Chilkat) used fire drills, including the bow type, as well as percussion methods of fire making. Drucker, *Culture Element Distributions: XXVI, Northwest Coast* (1948), 302.

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